



MAGIC VALLEY

BLAINE, CAMAS, CASSIA, GOODING, JEROME, LINCOLN, MINIDOKA, & TWIN FALLS COUNTIES

EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

The September 2001 seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for the Magic Valley LMA was 3.8 percent. This was eight-tenths of a percentage point higher than August 2001, but six-tenths of a percentage point lower than September 2000. This very low unemployment rate indicates strong employment despite some signs of an economic slow down.

A 4.6 percent reduction in the number of *Nonfarm Payroll Jobs* from September 2000 to September 2001 indicates that South Central Idaho is following the trends in both the state and the nation toward economic downturn. However, strong employment numbers seem to support the contention that South Central Idaho is somewhat insulated from some of the more severe economic problems and that the local economy, while experiencing a slow down, is not as severely affected as other areas. Some reasons for this "insulation" are that the sectors that seem to be most severely impacted in the nation, and even in other parts of Idaho, are *Manufacturing*, particularly jobs in the high tech sector. With the exception of the newly announced Dell Computer technical support jobs that will positively impact the area in the next couple of months, South Central Idaho has very few technology and heavy manufacturing jobs. Most *Manufacturing* positions are in *Food Processing*, a stable sector.

Two major sectors that appear to be affected by both the economic downturn and the terrorist attacks on September 11 are *Services* and *Retail Trade*, which are down 8.6 percent and 6.4 percent respectively. These two sectors are most closely tied to consumer confidence and the spending of discretionary income. Tourism was already impacted by the drought situation because many natural attractions such as Shoshone Falls and Snake River tours were without suffi-

Magic Valley Table 1: Labor Force & Employment
Twin Falls, Jerome, and Gooding counties

	Sept 2001*	August 2001	Sept 2000	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
Seasonally Adjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	47,230	47,020	46,600	0.4	1.4
Unemployment	1,780	1,410	2,060	26.2	-13.6
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.8	3.0	4.4		
Total Employment	45,450	45,610	44,540	-0.4	2.0
Unadjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	48,300	48,410	47,590	-0.2	1.5
Unemployment	1,450	1,550	1,660	-6.5	-12.7
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.0	3.2	3.5		
Total Employment	46,850	46,860	45,930	0.0	2.0
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs**	37,440	37,120	39,240	0.9	-4.6
Goods-Producing Industries	7,730	7,860	7,910	-1.7	-2.3
Mining & Construction	2,140	2,250	2,150	-4.9	-0.5
Manufacturing	5,590	5,610	5,760	-0.4	-3.0
Durable Goods	770	850	780	-9.4	-1.3
Nondurable Goods	4,820	4,760	4,980	1.3	-3.2
Food Processing	3,750	3,650	3,910	2.7	-4.1
All Other Nondurable Goods	1,070	1,110	1,070	-3.6	0.0
Service-Producing Industries	29,710	29,260	31,330	1.5	-5.2
Transportation, Comm., & Utilities	2,440	2,370	2,910	3.0	-16.2
Wholesale Trade	2,280	2,330	2,280	-2.1	0.0
Retail Trade	8,060	8,120	8,610	-0.7	-6.4
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	1,210	1,220	1,320	-0.8	-8.3
Services	8,070	7,940	8,830	1.6	-8.6
Government Administration	3,670	3,800	3,860	-3.4	-4.9
Government Education	3,980	3,480	3,520	14.4	13.1

*Preliminary Estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

cient water to draw tourists to South Central Idaho, and consumers seem to be spending less. Therefore, the outlook for South Central Idaho continues to be an economic cooling, but at a slower pace than other areas of the state and the nation.

AREA DEVELOPMENTS

Twin Falls County

- Dell Corporation announced its intention to locate a technical support center in Twin Falls to begin operation in early 2002. The technical support center will initially employ 200-250 workers with the possibility of future expansion. The facility will be located in the recently vacated Albertson's building on Pole Line Road in north Twin Falls. This announcement was the culmination of many months of intensive negotiations between Dell, the City of Twin Falls, the College of Southern

Idaho, and the State of Idaho. Dell already has begun recruitment efforts, and the Magic Valley Job Service is centrally involved in the process. Job Service has hired several temporary employees and installed new telephone lines to accommodate the extra workload. The College of Southern Idaho will be assisting with training and recruitment, and has developed new classes for persons interested in entering the computer/technical job market. Dell is hoping to have the technical center staffed and running early in 2002.

- The new Veterans Administration community-based outpatient clinic in Twin Falls is nearing completion and is expected to open November 5, 2001. The 4,000-square-foot facility is located at 260 Second Avenue East in Twin Falls. The VA opened its outpatient facility in June 2000 in a rented space, and patient load has increased from 400 to 1,500 veterans. The new facility is double the size of the existing rented space.
- The Historic Old Towne business improvement district has hired Richard Crowley as its new Executive Director. Mr. Crowley, who owns Crowley's-the Quad in the Magic Valley Mall and Crowley's Soda Fountain and General Store in downtown Twin Falls, earned a bachelor's degree in business management from Brigham Young University and spent six years with WordPerfect Corp. and Novell Corp. as regional manager. Before returning to Twin Falls, Mr. Crowley spent two years as facility administrator and assistant administrator for Ara Living Centers.
- Five more employers have adopted drug-screening policies to join the growing number of local businesses in the Magic Valley Drug-Free Workplace Project. The newest members are: K&T Steel Corporation in Twin Falls; St. Benedicts Family Medical Center in Jerome; Lamb-Weston, Inc., in Twin Falls; Mueller Auto Inc., in Twin Falls; and S&G Produce Co. Inc., in Twin Falls. This brings the total to 77 local businesses and organizations that have taken a stand against drugs in the workplace.
- Magic Valley Regional Medical Center has bought the Twin Falls Clinic & Hospital's inpatient services. Some details, such as purchase price, are still being negotiated, but both sides have signed a binding resolution. Inpatient services that will be transferred to the control of the medical center include admissions, intensive care, a pharmacy, respiratory therapy, and support services and equipment. The agreement will not affect outpatient services or physicians' practices at the clinic. The clinic is presently licensed for 44 beds.

Jerome, Gooding, Camas, Lincoln, & Blaine Counties

- Glanbia Foods, Inc., announced plans for a \$5.6 million investment in its Gooding cheese operation that will increase milk-processing capacity from its current level of 5.5 million pounds of milk per day to 6.25 million pounds. Most of the investment will be for more ultra-filtration and reverse-osmosis equipment, and additional milk-receiving truck bays. The project will begin immediately, and Glanbia Foods expects to be able to use the additional capacity by March 31, 2002.

Cassia & Minidoka Counties

- The College of Southern Idaho announced a \$230,000 expansion of its nursing program in the Mini-Cassia area to include laboratory and clinical instruction for Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs). The CSI branch in Burley has more than 60 students in a two-year Registered Nursing program, but its LPN program was offered only in Twin Falls. The expansion is in response to local shortages of LPNs. It is anticipated that about 20 students per year will participate in the Mini-Cassia program. Combined with the Twin Falls program, the college will graduate about 40 new LPNs per year. The new program will feature classes at the CSI branch in Burley. Students will train in laboratory methods at Minico High School's lab that CSI is equipping with a \$170,000 interactive video system for LPN students. The LPN training course lasts approximately one year. There is extremely high demand in the area for all nursing professions and an LPN can expect to make \$12 to \$13 per hour with full benefits.

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